

## A Word to Nonsmokers

(about smokers)

Today there is a massive campaign under way by literally dozens of anti-smoking groups to coerce smokers into not smoking -- by punitive taxation, by prohibitions and propaganda, by restricting places where smoking is permitted and by social pressures of all kinds.

Their campaign will succeed if they get the cooperation of nonsmokers. It will fail if they do not.

One of the essential appeals is that such repression is "for the smoker's own good."

But is it really?

Smokers, some 60 million of them, continue to smoke despite the "risks" they have been well informed of, because of benefits they perceive.

Each has made his own "risk-benefit analysis" and each is entitled to that freedom of choice.

The benefits of smoking were recognized in the first Surgeon General's report:

"Evaluation of the effects of smoking on health," it states, "would lack perspective if no consideration was given to the possible benefits to be derived from the occasional or habitual use of tobacco."

The report also states:

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"The significant beneficial effects of smoking occur primarily in the area of mental health, and the habit originates in a search for contentment."

The Nobel Laureate, Professor Ulf von Euler finds it surprising that so little research has been done on the "positive effects" of smoking.

"No one really believes," he says, "that such a large group of humanity

would be using tobacco or products containing nicotine ... if it was not for the fact that it gives effects that can be considered positive."

Several scientists have said that it may be dangerous for some individuals, especially those for whom smoking relieves tension, to give up cigarettes.

The world's foremost authority on stress, Dr. Hans Selye, questions whether the "over-dramatization" of smoking and health studies has created "innumerable hypochondriacs."

"We have seen many examples of this in medicine: for example, in connection with the so-called 'cardiac neurosis' which can make an essentially healthy man miserable all his life. Such an 'over-enlightened' anxious layman has read so much about the dangers of heart disease that each time he feels a mild pain in his chest ... he believes himself to be in imminent danger of death."

"I wonder how many people who just could not give up smoking might have continued to lead a perfectly normal life had they not been plagued by fears of being not only in great peril, but actually sinful."

Such scientific statements raise, at the very least, the possibility that the anti-smokers may not be operating "for the smoker's own good" but actually to his great harm.

And until we have a scientific answer to that, isn't it perhaps best for all of us to do what Americans have always done -- to allow each of us to decide for ourselves.

The Tobacco Institute

Freedom of choice is the best choice.

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